

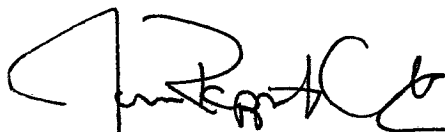


U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

PART 621 FW 1-3	SUBJECT Fire Management Policies and Responsibilities for Fire Management Fire Mgt Preparedness and Planning Prescribed Fire Management	RELEASE NUMBER 346
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT Division of Refuges		DATE February 7, 2000

EXPLANATION OF MATERIAL TRANSMITTED:

These chapters describe policies, objectives, definitions, and responsibilities for fire management. They reflect changes required by 620 DM 1 and 2 and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review Report, December 18, 1995.



DIRECTOR

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:

Remove:

621 FW 1, 04/20/95, FWM 190 (2 sheets)
621 FW 2, 04/03/95, FWM 185 (1 sheet)
621 FW 1, 06/24/94, FWM 150 (1 sheet)

Insert:

621 FW 1, 02/07/00, FWM 346 (2 sheets)
621 FW 2, 02/07/00, FWM 346 (1 sheet)
621 FW 1, 02/07/00, FWM 346 (1 sheet)

Chapter 2 Fire Management Preparedness and Planning

621 FW 2

2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter describes the fire planning we require in the fire management program. The Fire Management Preparedness and Planning Chapter of our Fire Management Handbook contains detailed guidance.

2.2 What planning must be done?

A. We currently have two levels of planning: Regional and Refuge. Regional planning includes preparedness planning, which describes activities that lead to a safe, efficient and cost-effective fire management program in support of land and resource management objectives at our refuges. Complete this level of planning prior to the Region's normal fire season. The refuge level planning activity focuses on the Fire Management Plan (FMP) and its activity and support documents.

B. We will conduct fire management planning on an interagency basis with the involvement of all our partners where we share adjoining boundaries.

2.3 What is a Fire Management Plan? We will have an approved FMP for every area with burnable vegetation. Our FMPs must be consistent with firefighter and public safety, protection values, and land, natural, and cultural resource management plans, and must address public health issues. Our FMPs must address all potential wildland fire occurrences and may include the full range of wildland fire management actions. We will coordinate these plans with appropriate specialists at the Regional level and obtain the approval of the responsible agency administrators to ensure consistency with approved land management plans.

A. The FMP is a strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires and documents the fire management program in the approved land use plan. Operational plans such as preparedness plans, pre-planned dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans and prevention plans supplement the plan.

B. Fire management options are severely limited on any refuge without an approved FMP. In these situations, refuges may only implement suppression strategies to manage wildland fires. Refuges cannot conduct prescribed fire operations without an approved fire management plan.

C. Project leaders will prepare the FMP with assistance from the Fire Management Officer, field office staff, and other specialists such as the Regional Historic Preservation Officer or the endangered species biologist and the public, as appropriate. Obtain concurrence from the Regional Fire

Management Coordinator, and approval from the Regional Director. Project leaders will review annually and update as necessary all operational support plans, e.g., Dispatch, Prevention, Step-up, Pre-attack, etc. Submit significant updates to existing plans to the Regional Office.

(1) The FMP may consist of several parts. As appropriate, the FMP will include sections on preparedness, prescribed and wildland fire operations, prevention, and detection. Where complexity warrants, we may require operational support plans covering these areas to provide day-to-day operational guidance.

(2) Each Refuge and Wetland Management District will complete the wildland fire section of the FMP to assure that we adequately protect field office resources including staff, the general public, and private property from wildland fires.

(3) The approved FMP is the authority for expenditure of fire management and resource management funds for prescribed fire.

(4) Refuges will review and/or revise plans at a minimum of 5-year intervals or when we propose significant changes. When land use changes occur adjacent to our lands, we will review the plan to determine the need for revisions in fuel management or hazard reduction procedures.

B. A simple FMP describing wildland fire operations will be sufficient for small refuges, hatcheries, wildlife management areas, and waterfowl production areas scattered among private lands, where local fire departments will suppress wildland fires.

2.4 What are activity plans?

A. Prescribed Fire Plan.

(1) To use prescribed fire, the FMP must include it under management options. We require an approved Prescribed Fire Plan for each prescribed fire. You may use a plan again for the same burn plot as long as the prescriptions remain valid or until new mandates dictate plan amendments. All prescribed fire plans must contain current and valid prescriptions. Regional Directors may establish a process to delegate prescribed fire plan approval to the responsible agency administrator. Regional review and concurrence processes for prescribed fire plans must include the responsible Burn Boss and Regionally-designated subject matter experts. We will review all prescribed fires after completion. We discuss our procedures for prescribed fire in 621 FW 3.

(2) You must comply with NEPA requirements for all prescribed fires. You must prepare an environmental assessment for each Prescribed Fire Plan unless: (a) the field office's approved FMP or planning documents and the accompanying environmental document adequately discuss the action; or (b) a categorical exclusion covers the activity.

B. Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan. You must prepare a Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan whenever a wildland fire causes sufficient damage to a refuge's natural resources to warrant direct and immediate rehabilitation. Wildland Fire Management, 095 FW 3, discusses rehabilitation planning with detailed guidance provided in our Fire Management Handbook.

2.5 What plans are done at the Regional Level?

A. Each Region must prepare a Regional Dispatch Plan prior to the Region's normal fire season. We design this plan to give information needed for large fire support, and it contains current information regarding personnel and equipment availability, duty contacts, and telephone numbers of Regional fire management personnel.

(1) Regional Fire Management Coordinators should work with the appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center for incident support and service. We may incorporate the Regional Dispatch Plan into the Geographic Area Coordination Center's mobilization plan to provide better local interagency coordination.

(2) The National Interagency Mobilization Guide, NFES 2092, available from the National Interagency Fire Center, is an interagency document that identifies established standard procedures which guide the operations of multi-agency logistical support activity. We will use the Mobilization Guide to facilitate interagency dispatch coordination.

(3) Each Regional Dispatch Plan will include preparedness planning for the Region. These plans help us in timely recognition of approaching critical fire situations. RFMCs will determine whether we will need preparedness plans at the refuge level. In most cases, the preparedness planning done at the Geographic Area Coordination Center level will provide adequate guidance.

B. Step-up plans are operational plans that can be a part of the preparedness planning process at the Regional level. They can provide Regional level guidance on preparedness activities we need to implement based upon worsening burning conditions, and we can use them in conjunction with regional/geographic area preparedness planning. The plan authorizes increased preparedness in order to have appropriate resources available for initial action.